



Trim Pro-2

adds to glowing reputation of RCBS

Paul Miller

It's widely accepted that RCBS is one of the world's leading manufacturers of reloading presses for both metallic rifle cartridges and shotgun shells.

For many years I've had excellent results with an RCBS Partner Press Kit and have reloaded a lot of rifle cartridges in several calibres with this superb little press as well as accessories and RCBS dies bought separately.

These kits are great for initial forays into serious reloading but you also need a case trimmer if you're starting to do enough shooting that your shells begin to stretch with repeated reloading. Some cartridges tend to stretch more than others depending on the shape of their neck and sharpness or otherwise of their shoulders. We often hear of people shooting 'improved' cartridges where a factory cartridge like the .257 Roberts is fire-formed in a rifle with an improved chamber.

In this example a .257 Roberts Ackley Improved has a much sharper shoulder

angle of 40 degrees. The standard factory .257 Roberts has a shoulder angle of 20 degrees 45' which means it's more likely to feed and chamber easily but also experience neck stretching over time, especially with reloads at the top end of the performance range. Some cartridges provide quite an increase in performance when improved with less taper in the case and more angle in the shoulder, so increasing case capacity. Less frequent or non-existent trimming for the life of the case is an added bonus.

Once a cartridge neck stretches to a point where the manufacturer's specification for cartridge overall case length is exceeded, you can run into problems with chambering your rounds subject to the length of your chamber. A case that's too long can enter the throat of a firearm and a case jammed in this way makes releasing the bullet more difficult on firing. This can dramatically increase pressures and be potentially highly dangerous and damaging to the firearm and, in a worst case scenario, the shooter.

Some people view trimming cases as unnecessary or simply chuck them away and replace with new ones or buy another quantity of factory loads when they reach maximum recommended length. Some more exotic cartridge cases are rather expensive to buy so throwing them away



The pilot slides into the cutter head and is secured by tightening the set screw with a hex key wrench.

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rather than resizing can become a costly exercise. The same can be said for buying exotic factory loads.

If you're interested in consistency and accuracy and ultimately safety, you need to trim your cases when they reach the maximum length stated in the various reloading guides available world-wide. The rule of thumb for trimming is ten-thousands of an inch below the stated maximum overall cartridge length. With a trimmer like this RCBS it's an easy and satisfying job to perform knowing all your cases are the same length and right on specification.

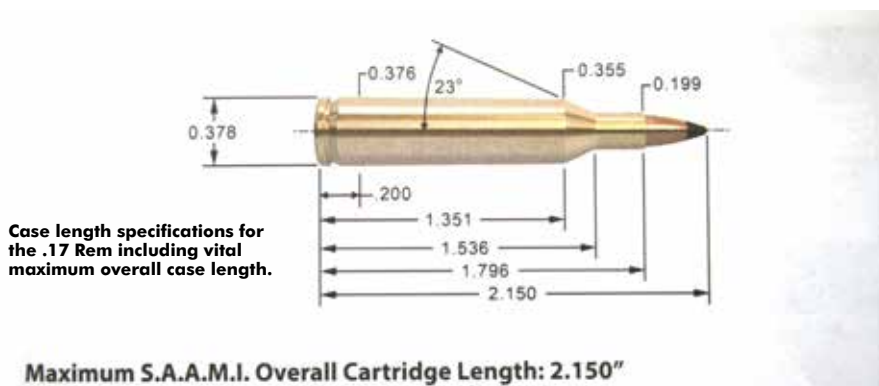
The three favourite cartridges I reload are the .17 Remington, .220 Swift and .25-06. These are all high performance cartridges that stretch their necks with repeated firing of near maximum loads. I never run any of them flat out but still the brass flows forward over a number of firings and they need trimming. These all fall into the expensive category when it comes to buying factory empties. Purchasing these as loaded cartridges really puts a dent in your overdraft. These are all fine examples of why you should trim cartridges and extend their useful reloading life both for economy and safety.

The RCBS Trim Pro-2 is a well-made unit and comes with nine trimmer pilots from .22 cal to .45 cal. Other smaller diameter pilots like .17 and .20 cal are available to buy separately. It's robustly constructed and has a feeling of real quality and precision when put to use.

This trimmer is easy to install by just screwing it to your reloading bench or a substantial piece of timber if you want to make it portable. Simply attach the lever to the spring-loaded Universal shell holder assembly and you're ready to start. Select the calibre of pilot and install it in the cutter head and tighten the retaining set screw with a 1/8" hex key wrench. Ideally, select



The essential Vernier caliper showing the cartridge at maximum length and in need of trimming.



Case length specifications for the .17 Rem including vital maximum overall case length.

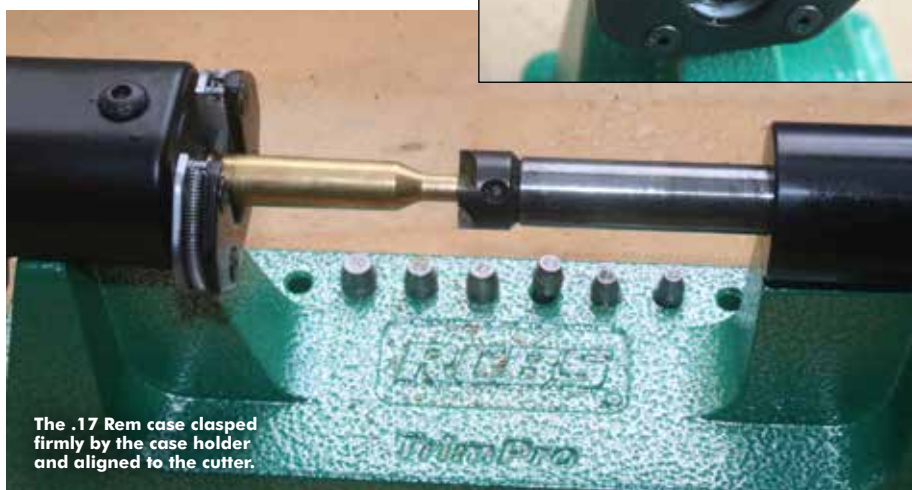
Maximum S.A.A.M.I. Overall Cartridge Length: 2.150"



a case that's already trimmed to size and push down on the lever to insert the case in the shell holder. The two jaws firmly hold and locate the case and this aligns the case to the pilot and cutter.

Grasp the substantial handle on the revolving cutter bar and push the pilot smoothly into the case as far as it will go. Slide the coarse adjustment bushing with the fine adjustment bushing attached to touch the back of the cutter guide and lock the coarse bushing in place. From here it's a matter of tweaking the fine adjustment to obtain exactly the overall cartridge length you want. This machine is accurate to within 0.001 of an inch and those modifications are easily applied on the fine adjustment bushing then locked in place with the same Allen key as the coarse bushing.

Push down on the lever and insert your cartridge then shove the pilot into the cartridge mouth where it gives a firm fit and ensures concentricity in the trimming process. You will need a Vernier caliper to make accurate measurements and it's a simple process to trim your cartridges. These calipers are another essential for safe reloading so you can make various measurements of your cases and finished reloaded cartridges to ensure they're safe to fire.



The .17 Rem case clasped firmly by the case holder and aligned to the cutter.

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I really rate the spring-loaded Universal shell holder as it does away with changing individual case holders and is so quick and positive to use. The shell is perfectly aligned to the cutter and a simple trim inside and outside with a hand-held chamfering and deburring tool is all that's needed after the machine trimming is done.

I believe there are also various calibre-specific three-way cutters available which attach by removing the cutter head provided with the trimmer. These units apparently trim, chamfer and deburr all in one operation for a neat job. I'll have to look into this for my three hot shots sometime soon, although it's no hardship to use a manual tool for a quick chamfer and deburr.

This trimmer retails for around \$275 from gunshops Australia-wide and provides the comfort of the RCBS reputation for quality, reliability and warranty. I recommend it highly as a top-notch product and an absolute necessity for reloading consistent cartridges that contribute both to accuracy and, most importantly, safety. For more, visit noia.net.au or rcbs.com. ●



Maximum accuracy of trim length is achieved with the 0.001" indications on the fine adjustment bushing.



The correct trim length and ready to safely reload and fire.

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